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ABSTRACT

The document describes a study which focuses on women in Texas who oppose the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA). Their sociological background and their reasons for opposition are examined. The study examined 875 letters to a Texas state senator concerning a recall of Texas ratification and 175 questionnaires from a survey of anti-ERA activists at a rally in April, 1977. A variety of socioeconomic factors such as age, marital status, employment, education, family income, religion, and political activity were considered as well as reasons for opposition to the ERA. Findings showed the women to be mainly middle and upper class, educated, married, and half were under 36 years old. They were very religious and extremely active politically, particularly as conservatives. The most important reason for opposing the ERA was that it threatened womens' roles, femininity, and their rights, though lesser reasons were related to states' rights, moral issues, and threats against the social structure. These reasons varied somewhat according to religious preferences. Conclusions showed an apparent correlation between the women's religious beliefs and their opposition to the ERA, some personal motivations, and that the women are using the political methods usually ascribed to more politically sophisticated males with a dash of feminine wiles. (CK)

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WOMEN AGAINST WOMEN: THE RISE OF ANTIFEMINISM

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Paper prepared for delivery at the 1980 Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, Washington, D.C., August 31, 1980.

WOMEN AGAINST WOMEN: THE RISE OF ANTIFEMINISM

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The Equal Rights Amendment, the proposed amendment to the U.S. constitution providing equal legal rights regardless of sex, is meeting formidable opposition from a segment of the very sex it was designed to help; women. The purpose of this paper is to focus on who these women are and why they oppose the ERA. The study partially focuses on women in Texas, but there are indications that they are probably typical of many of the women opposed to the ERA nationwide.

THE EQUAL RIGHTS AMENDMENT: BACKGROUND

The Equal Rights Amendment has been before Congress since 1923. It was proposed as a logical step toward further equality for women after the suffrage amendment was passed. Its purpose was to put an end to state discriminatory legislation.[1] It was not, however,until 1972 that the amendment was passed by Congress and sent to the states for ratification. At first the constituency pressure for the ERA was enormous and then it met with little opposition. Within the year, 30 states out of the needed 38 had ratified the amendment. Texas was the

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* I would like to acknowledge Becky Conn, a graduate student in Political Science, in assisting me in planning strategies for collecting data, implementing data gathering, and helping in the organization of its final presentation.

eighth state to do so in a special three-day session in March, 1972.

Much to the surprise of pro-ERA forces, in late 1973, the Nebraska legislature voted to rescind the ERA. This signaled that a new coalition was forming and a backlash of major proportions was in the making. Since that time, rescission efforts have taken shape in over two-thirds of the states that have already ratified the ERA. Only two states have ratified the ERA since February, 1975. By 1976, the ERA

> had already come to be characterized as controversial, members of the general public had joined in the conflict, decision makers had become wary, and a pattern of legislative defeats had been established.[2]

It is still three states short of the 38 needed to make the ERA the 27th amendment. By March 22, 1979, the end of seven years allowed for ratification, were up. A successful campaign was waged to extend the deadline for ratification until March, 1982. Although Congress has given the amendment a 3 year extension on life, odds are running against passage. There is now a feeling that the anti-ERA forces will be successful in blocking ratification of the ERA.

The goal of this research essay will be to examine who the anti-ERA women are, their attitudes, and their reasons for their opposition. One way to ascertain this information was through examination of 875 letters written to a Texas state Senator between February and April 1977. The 875 letters comprised his mail concerning Texas Senate Resolution 24, proposing a "recall" of the Texas ratification of the Federal Equal Rights Amendment.[3] Views expressed in 814 letters were anti-ERA asking him to take a stand against ERA, or at least vote SRC 24 out of committee. Only 61 letters expressed pro-ERA sentiment.

Also to better understand the anti-ERA women--who they are, their attitudes, and what their objections to the ERA are, a survey of anti-ERA activists was also conducted. It was hoped it would assist in determining the socio-economic status of anti-ERA activists and to serve as a check and comparison with the viewpoints expressed in the letters. Several thousand women visited Austin, the State Capital of Texas, on April 13, 1977. They came from all over Texas to attend the anti-ERA rally, to lobby state officials, and to observe the committee hearing on the House resolution to recall the ERA.

Female students from an interdisciplinary education and political science course at the University of Texas administered a one page questionnaire to women who appeared to be opposing the ERA. Although support ERA forces were in attendance, the anti-ERA group was easily distinguished by "STOP ERA" badges or other similar insignia. As there was a large crowd of people milling around the Capitol, there was plenty of time for interviewers to get samplings from various contingents. Care was taken not to survey more than one or two from a group that had obviously come together. Less than 5% refused to participate. Interviewers were instructed to dress and act in an unbiased and nonthreatening way. Often the subjects wanted to discuss their viewpoints and for the most part were friendly and willing respondents. The findings from the survey presented in this paper are based on the 175 questionnaires successfully completed by the interviewers.

ANTIFEMINIST WOMEN: A SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILE

The women who came to the Capitol to oppose the ERA present a slightly different image than one first gets from early media accounts and feminist scholars. Antifeminists were perceived by both feminists and scholars as "fools," "crazy old ladies in tennis shoes," "overweight women with dated bee hive hairdos," and "pawns of male power brokers."[4] Most women were well-groomed and dressed stylishly. A few women were accompanied by husbands and children, mostly infants. With readily visible exceptions, the racial composition of the anti-ERA group was Caucasian.

Age

Results from the survey in regard to age indicate that almost one half (49%) are under 36 years of age, raising some question concerning the common belief that most anti-ERA women are over 40. Less than 10% fall in the under 18 and over 65 groups combined.

Marital Status

Married women are in the majority, with 72% married and 9% widowed. Only 14% are single and 5% divorced. Practically all of the married and widowed women are mothers (99%), averaging 2.7 children each.

Employment Status

Of all married women in the United States, 44.4% are employed.[5] Of those married women in this survey, 28% are employed at either full-time or part-time jobs. 72% of the married women and 63% of the widows are full-time housewives. Only 2% of the women in the 27-36 year age bracket are students, while statistics are showing that a growing number of women in this age category are returning to school to continue their education.

Educational Level

The average level of education for women in Texas is 11.6 years of school. 19% have had some college and only 9% are college graduates.[6] In this sample, 65% have attended college and 27% are college graduates. Only 11 or 6% of these women over 18 have not graduated from high school. This group reflects a higher level of education than the women surveyed in the University of Houston study.[7] Of that group, 35% had attended college and 16% were college graduates.[8]

Rural/Urban Split

The anti-ERA women in the 1977 survey are fairly evenly divided into rural and urban regional Texas heritage: 56% were raised in small towns and the country, and 44% in the city and suburbs. Now 62% say that they live in a city or suburb, while only 15% live in the country and 23% in small towns.

Family Income

The median family income for this group falls above the average Texas income of $12,627,[9] with almost 53% reporting over $15,000. Slightly over 20 had incomes over $20,000 and less than 20% had incomes under $10,000.

Husband's Occupation

The husbands' occupations reflect the general middle and upper-middle class status most of the women enjoy. 20% of their husbands are doctors, lawyers, engineers, and other professionals; 19% own their own business or work in a management or supervisory capacity; 20% are semi-professionals or are in sales. Skilled craftsmen make up 15%, and 9% are farmers or ranchers. The remainder include fundamentalist ministers (4%), retired (6%), policemen and firemen (5%), and military (2%).

A salient aspect of this survey deals with religious preferences and participation. This sample of women appears to be much more actively religious than the average Texan or American. Of the women surveyed, 95% say they attend church regularly. In comparison, 56% of the population in Texas even belong to a church.[10] A Gallup Poll surveying religious attitudes in the United States showed that 31% reported that religion was very important in their lives; 61% fairly important, and 8% not important.[11]

The religious composition of the anti-ERA group is heavily weighted toward fundamentalist sects: 31% are members of the Church of Christ, and 4.5% are either members of Assembly of God or Church of the Nazarene. Mormons (Church of the Latter Day Saints) account for 23%, Catholic 6%, and mainstream Protestants 13%. Those in this sample considered mainstream Protestants are: Baptists, Presbyterians, Methodists, Christians, Lutherans, and Episcopalians.

21% elected not to answer this question or responded that they belonged to an interdenominational church. Since mainstream Protestants make up 62% of the total Texas church membership, Catholics 32%, and Mormons less than 1%, this distribution is atypical of the state as a whole. It is obvious that the antifeminists are composed of more Church of Christ members, Mormons, and Catholics than the Texas population in general.[12]

It is interesting to look at characteristics of the antifeminist Church members in this group. The Mormon women were the youngest with 76% in the 18 to 36 year age bracket. Most of their husbands were either semi-professionals (50%) or professionals (21%) with skilled craftsmen making up 29%. The fundamentalists were the most affluent,

with 54% having family incomes over $15,000. The mainstream Protestant women comprise the oldest group, with 60% over 49. They had the highest level of education with 80% having attended college. The Catholics were almost evenly divided between the over 49 age group and the 18-36 age group, with only 9% f lling in the 37 to 48 age bracket. They were also less affluent than the Mormons and the fundamentalists: only 26% had an income over $15,00.

Organizational Membership

When asked in which organizations they were most active, 47% of the women listed their church. Almost 75% of the women listed at least one organization in which they were actively involved. PTA, other school related groups, women's clubs, and garden clubs were mentioned. 25% are active in anti-ERA groups such as the Association of the W's, TUFF, and Eagle Forum. 37% are members of what they consider political organizations.[13]

ANTIFEMINIST WOMEN: A POLITICAL PROFILE

Political Participation

In comparison to the average, these women are extremely active: 89% have voted within the last year, compared to 43% of U.S. women; 55% have contributed time or money to a political campaign; 62% have displayed campaign signs in their yards or worn political buttons; 37% belong to a political organization.[14] Seven women (6%) have even run for political office within the last year. 77% said they have written letters to state officials and/or newspapers informing them of their political position. While all the women questioned were in a sense "visiting a state official to express their views," only 67% said that they had ever done this before. It seems that at

least some of these women do not perceive their trip to the Capitol as a lobbying activity--that they come as observers rather than participants. Yet their political participation is much higher than the average citizen.[15]

Ideological Orientation and Party Identification

Democrats comprise 28% of those questioned; 46% say they are Republicans; and 7% are members of the American Party. 19% claim to be Independents, saying they vote for the person, not the party. Conservatism is the dominant political ideological orientation among these women: 27% are very conservative; 51%, conservative; 21%, moderate; and less than 2%, liberal. While many voters consider themselves conservative, Texas is historically a Democratic state. This group appears more conservative than most Texas citizens in political ideological orientation.

Political Efficacy

Evidence from this survey indicates that the anti-ERA women rank high in political efficacy. The belief that one can cope with the complexities of politics and can have some effect on the political process has been closely tied to a high voting turn-out.[16] Brady and Tedin, in their study of the "Ladies in Pink," found over half (63%) felt that they had an influence on the actions of government and even more (75%, felt that they had a say about what the government does.[17]

It is also interesting to note how these women became aware of the Equal Rights Amendment issue. Of those who answered the question, 24% said they first learned about ERA through family or friends. The majority of the fundamentalist and Catholic women learned about ERA

in this way. However, 46% of the Mormon women learned about the issue from their Church. Mainstream Protestant women said they became aware of ERA through membership in anti-ERA organizations, such as the Association of the W's, and through independent reading and research.

REASONS FOR OPPOSITION TO THE ERA

Reasons the anti-ERA women give for opposing the Equal Rights Amendment can be summed up in general categories. The letters are particularly helpful in giving an insight into the women from a greater indepth perspective than just public opinion Polls with predetermined categories. The appearance of the letters varied and included typed and handwritten on flowery stationery, postcards, and lined notebook paper. Only 68 of the letters were from men, although 47 letters were signed "Mr. and Mrs." The content was not significantly different from those signed by only women. These letters came from every part of Texas, with the west, central, northern, and Gulf Coast areas most prominent. At least 147 different towns were represented, fairly equally divided between large cities and small towns. Approximately 200 letters only expressed the hope that the senator would vote to rescind the ERA. They often said that Texans had seen the light and, knowing more about the ERA now than they did in 1972, did not want it.

It is important to note that whether answering a question in a survey at the Capitol or writing a letter to a state legislator, these women seem to give similar reasons for opposing the ERA. Where relevant data from the letters and the survey responses will be given. In examining the letters, it should be mentioned that many give no reason, some letters give more than one reason, and many of the reasons

given overlap, are interrelated and not mutually exclusive.

The most prevalent reasons given by letter writers (30%) and women surveyed at the Capitol (35%) concerned their role as women. They see the ERA as threatening their role as women and their femininity. The ERA is perceived as something that will take away rights and privileges they enjoy now solely because they are women. The idea that women, through Biblical definition or tradition, are not equal to men and should not be made to step outside the traditional role of housewife and mother is a common reason given from these two sources. The letter writers express these ideas:

> "This attempt to destroy femininity and to make men and women equal is entirely contrary to God's law and to my wishes."
>
> "I can see that we would lose many of the protections we enjoy: freedom from the draft, having our husbands legally required to support us and protective labor laws. I am a woman and proud of it."
>
> "Let us continue to sit on our pedastals. The ERA will result in the loss of rights for full-time homemakers."
>
> "Women have the best status in America that women have had in any age. Most Christian women want to live under the Biblical mandate and are happy being women."

Their dislike for activists in the women's movement, referred to in the pejorative term, "Women's libbers," was evident in some letters:

> "It does not seem fair for the 'liberated women' to force their pattern of life on to the women who prefer the traditional homemaker role. Women don't want to be liberated. They desire to be women, wives, and mothers. Women belong at home.

And implores one letter writer:

> "I don't want to be treated like a man. Would you like to be treated like a woman?"

The Draft

Some indicate opposition to the ERA on the grounds that women could be drafted. Concern is particularly expressed for women who have daughters. For examples, some excerpts are included in the following:

> "I don't want to be drafted and have my husband take care of my children while I am overseas."

> "The main reason I am against the ERA is the drafting of females. I am not one that believes that women's place is always in the home, but there are certain places a woman should not be and war is one of them."

> "Think of the atrocious abuses of POW's. What would happen to female POW's?"

> "I don't want my lovely daughter to be drafted. I want her to have the wonderful opportunity of being a wife and mother. I believe there is no greater gift given to women than that of being a wife and mother."

The Future of Children and the Family

Concern for the future of the family and children is expressed by one-third of the women at the Capitol and a similar number of the letter writers. For example, see the following:

> "I feel it would undermine our basic family structure as we know it here in America."

> "I am enclosing our family picture so you can see just exactly some of the lives that will be hardened with the law of ERA."

> "I am soon to give birth to my first child and I don't want to raise my child or any other children in a world of the type that ERA would provide."

> "ERA is a threat to the stability of the home. Our best citizens come from a stable home."

Federal Infringement and States' Rights

The infringement of the ERA on states' rights concerned 15% of the surveyed women and 16% of the letter writers. Federal control over family matters worried them, especially the working of Section II of the Amendment: "Congress shall have the power to enforce by appropriate legislation, the provisions of this article." Court-ordered busing and integration was mentioned in only one letter but one senses that this is one example of federal involvement that is fresh in their minds and correlates to the notion of possible federal infringement by the ERA. Remarks concerning lack of confidence in the federal government and federal threats to states' rights were expressed. These opinions were expressed in some of the selections from the letters given in the following:

> "States have given up more than their share of rights to the federal government and this would be another step in that direction."
>
> "We don't want the federal bureaucrats and judges meddling in areas that are none of their business on the phony ground that they are eliminating sex discrimination."
>
> "If the ERA passes, federals will be on our neck doing their ridiculous stupid silly things and costing us millions of dollars. It is criminal how tax dollars are used to further the sins against God and humanity."
>
> "Section II of the ERA is a big grab for power by the federal government. Surely you aren't willing to surrender the state's rights to decide family issues to the federal government. If you and the other senators do, God help us all."
>
> "Washington doesn't possess the wisdom to handle what power it now controls. Why should we give them added control over our daily lives?"
>
> "The issue of women's rights is too serious and far-reaching to turn over to the federal government."

Religious Themes

Although religious themes are threaded throughout many letters, 10% of the letter writers and the survey respondents feel that the ERA is against God's will and His plan for women. They believe that it goes against "the Christian way of life." Some illustrations from the letters are in the following:

> "God-fearing Bible believing Texans want this satanic amendment recalled."

> "God created women as the weaker sex to be a helper for man. Our families are based on this and family life is basic to our society. ERA would destroy all of this. Once families are destroyed our nation will be destroyed also."

ERA and Morals

Some see the ERA as a moral issue. One example from a letter is the following excerpt:

> "A dangerous evil and immoral piece of legislation."

Homosexuality

In addition to seeing ERA as immoral legislation some see it as encouraging and legitimizing homosexuality. Several letters expressing these views are used for illustrative purposes in the following:

> "These liberal minded lesbians and homosexuals are behind this along with the communists. They have no respect for God or for the value of human life. It is bad enough Madalyn O'Hara took religion away from us in our schools; now the ERA is trying to turn us into a bunch of animals."

> "It would allow homosexuals to teach schools and be scout leaders, marry, and adopt children."

Threat to U.S. Social Structure

About 8% of both letter writers and survey respondents believe that the ERA is a threat to U.S. social structure and American security. Exemplary are the following comments:

"It tears at the very fiber of our civilization by destroying the right to be wives, mothers, and homemakers."

"ERA supporters are anti-Christ, anti-family, and anti-American. It is dangerous for America."

"ERA will continue to drag our great nation down. Our families, churches and schools will be damaged by ERA rather than improved."

Unisex Bathrooms and Other Forms of Sexual Integration

Unisex bathrooms were mentioned in only a few letters. Some are concerned that the ERA is worded in a sufficiently general and vague manner so as to make interpretation uncertain.

Lack of Need

Several writers questioned the need for an Equal Rights Amendment. They believed that all the laws necessary to give women equal rights are already on the books, citing the 14th Amendment, the 1964 Civil Rights Act, and the Equal Pay Act of 1963. They say if women do not have equal rights these laws already on the books should be enforced.

There is very little variance among the women when it comes to deciding which reason is most important. Women regardless of age, where they were raised, where they live now, their educational level, their income, see the role of women and the loss of rights as the single most important issue for opposition to the ERA.

Differences in priority of opposition show up only along religious lines. The fundamentalist women and Mormons are most concerned about women's rights and role. States' rights is the most popular issue among mainstream Protestants. Catholics feel that the ERA is too general or unnecessary. There is very little difference, strangely enough, in the reasoning of the full-time housewives and the full-time employed women. Whether the women learned about the ERA from their

church, friends, the news media, or independent reading, their main concern still centers around the role of women and the loss of privileges they think they have under the law.

INTERPRETATION

Religious Influence on the Antifeminists

There is an apparent correlation between the women's religious beliefs and their opposition to the ERA. Yet it should be noted that not all churches are against the ERA. The majority of mainstream Protestant churches have come out in support of the ERA, in addition to the Church Women United and the Texas Conference of Churches.

The Catholic Church has not taken an official stand on the ERA. There is intense opposition within the Church as well as Catholic groups working actively in support of the ERA. Organized Catholic opposition was credited with helping to defeat state ERA's in New York and New Jersey in November, 1975. Parish priests preached against it, saying the ERA was pro-abortion and weakened the position of women and the family. The most vocal opponent within the Catholic Church is the National Council of Catholic Women.[18]

Although each Church of Christ is independent and there is no central organization to make official statements in the name of the church, a network of communications is maintained through church published newspapers and magazines and also through church supported colleges. The survey taken at the Capitol indicated that members of the Church of Christ are very conservative. The members believe in a literal interpretation of the New Testament and much of their opposition is based on Saint Paul's statement on the role of women.

St. Paul states the role of women only in relation to the predominant role of man.

> "For a man. . .is the image and glory of God; but the woman is the glory of the man. For the man is not of the woman, but the woman of the man. Neither was the man created for the woman, but the woman for the man. . .I want you to understand that the head of every man is Christ the head of a woman is her husband and the head of Christ is God." 19

Although there are no central membership records kept for the Church of Christ, there are 2,013 Churches of Christ in Texas.

In Texas the Mormon Church is a relatively small sect but its membership is estimated at 52,000 and is believed to be growing by leaps and bounds. In states such as Nevada and Utah, where they have had more sizable memberships, Mormons have been very successful in defeating the ERA. Mormons believe that the role of woman is at home raising children and that the man is the head of the household as well as of the church. The members are very family-oriented and members are urged to participate in local political issues that are perceived as related to their interests.[20]

The Influence of Anti-ERA Political Organizations

From the Capitol survey, approximately one-fourth of the women said they were very active in anti-ERA organizations in Texas such as Women Who Want to be Women (formerly the W's, now Pro Family Forum), Eagle Forum, TUFF, and STOP ERA.

The W's are headquartered in Fort Worth. Their titular head is Lottie Beth Hobbs, an unmarried woman who identifies herself predominantly as a religious teacher for women.[21]

Phllis Schlafly's STOP ERA and Eagle Forum originate in her hometown of Alton, Illinois, but both organizations have strong political bases in Texas, particularly in the Dallas/Fort Worth area.

Lottie Beth Hobbs is a member of Eagle Forum but believes the W's perform a slightly different, more religious, function. TUFF seems to be a small Mormon effort in the Houston area. Through newsletters and meetings these groups are very effective in keeping their members informed and active. The fundamental grounds of opposition leaders such as Phyllis Schlafly is that women can best fulfill themselves through the traditional role of service and exaltation to the male head of the household. The joys of womanhood and the art of feminity, with a strong Biblical theme, are emphasized in these groups as well as in such seminars as Total Woman, Happiness of Womanhood, Fascinating Womanhood, and Eve Reborn.[22]

Sociological Influences on Antifeminists

While churches, antifeminist organizations, and right-wing political groups all have some degree of influence in the fight to defeat the ERA, it is important to consider another influence--those women who have a deep seated personal motivation to battle the ERA. From close examination of letters and interviews with these women, one finds that their motivations for opposition and fear of the ERA run deeper than usual church or political issues. They say a personal payoff in blocking the ERA.

> "Many women in middle motherhood, whose children are school age or older, are victims of a cruel transition. They were reared to fit well into a social system which provided that once married they would be taken care of the rest of their lives. Now that system is being drastically shaken up. . . Some. . .are lashing against state confirmation of the ERA and at the other enrolling in courses Fascinating Womanhood. . .They feel put down and defensive.[23]

In the 1950's and 1960's, the dependent, feminine, home-centered housewife was the prestigious role model. The career woman was perceived as the deviant, not quite normal type. Today those

women who want to stay at home and really don't want to enter the labor market feel on the defensive and the exception to the norm. This is particularly true of women who did well in college.[24]

Housewives who struggle every day not just with household chores but with maintaining values like loyalty and dedication and caring for others complain that their surrounding culture and society give them very little support. The "just a housewife" syndrome is very real to these women, and broadening women's choices and opportunities is making it worse.

> The American Housewife is suffering from a fundamental uncertainty about what a housewife is or should be. The joys and challenges of domestic life are unorganized and unmeasured. Even women who have given up careers because they feel that caring for families is more rewarding, yearn for reassurance that traditional values still hold.[25]

Even feminists find that the "old fashioned programmed to please woman in all women is at conflict."[26]

Jessie Bernard sees sex role definitions as more profoundly personal and moral than political, in spite of the ERA:

> The restructuring of sex roles today--the most fundamental change since the restructuring of society in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries is articulated in the ERA. In and of itself, the ERA does not mandate any role restructuring; it merely specifies that privileges, rights, duties, obligations, responsibilities be allocated without regard to sex per se. It is not the specific details of the ERA which are most significant. It is more significant as a symbol of the changes in roles now in process in our society than as a statement of the actual changes themselves.[27]

Helen Wolfe, former director of the American Association of Uniersity Women, sees the ERA backlash, in a setting of change and unrest, citing turmoil over Viet Nam, the Watergate scandals, and the worst recession since the depression. She notes that the weaker society perceives itself to be, the more it tends to cling to its

traditional value system and retreat from the new challenge. People in the United States have been sensing a breakdown in the traditional conception of the family, school, and church, as well as the role of the full-time housewife. Opposition to the ERA is one way to cry out against change and the unknown.[28]

Anti-feminists, Feminists, and the Future

The future of the Equal Rights Amendment, as well as the women's movement, depends not only on the actions of the feminists, but on the reactions of the anti-feminists as well. The era of moral climate created by civil rights reform in the 60's has seemed to come and end without ratification of the ERA. Even feminists have ambivalent feelings toward the ERA, but for decidedly different reasons than the anti-ERA women. Jo Freeman sees the Equal Rights Amendment issue deflecting its energies from more important concerns:

> The specific legal consequences of the ERA itself are not really worth the effort that has been put into it. It is only the political opportunities it offers as a by-product, and its symbolic values, which are worthwhile. . .failure to ratify can convince legislators that the movement has no political clout.[29]

As for the antifeminists, this writer believes these women can not be written off as pawns of male power brokers, when in fact they hold intense feelings and many times intelligent justifications for their beliefs and possess political sophistication in knowing which political levers to press where and when. Many feminist scholars have approached traditionalist women's groups with thinly disguised scorn. Had there been more efforts to understand these women, feminist practitioners may have incorporated them into their movement. The outcome of their activities may very well have ended

in the prevention of the ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment.

While there is no indication that the anti-ERA women feel alienated from government, they do feel a dislike, mistrust, and alienation from the women's movement. The ERA, to them, is a symbol of the feminist effort. Their role as women, as their churches and background define it, is being challenged.

Political scientists have found that those most likely to participate in unconventional behavior are not ignorant and low class. Instead, they tend to be better educated, more sophisticated, more interested in politics, more knowledgeable about it, and more efficacious about their personal capabilities. This description coincides with the information learned about the anti-ERA women who came to the Capitol in Austin in 1977. The paradox of these women "who want to be women," let men be dominant, and tend to their roles as mother and homemaker is fascinating, as they go about defending this role and trying to preserve it using methods usually ascribed to the more politically sophisticated male plus a few applied feminine wiles where politically useful.

FOOTNOTES

[1]J. Stanley Lemons, The Woman Citizen (Chicago, Ill.:. University of Illinois, 1973), pp. 184-186.

[2]Janet Boles, The Politics of the Equal Rights Amendment (New York, New York: Longman, Inc., 1979), p. 188.

[3]The bills introduced in the Texas House and Senate attempt to recall the Texas ratification of the ERA in 1972. The recall bill was an alternative to attempt to keep the ongoing 1972 Texas resolution from being counted. Texas would recall the initial resolution. Recall for Texas, the first and only state to attempt such an amendment, has been interpreted as a physical withdrawal of a bill from the files of the administrator of the General Services Administration for the U.S. (In the amendment process, once three-fourths of the states have ratified an amendment, the administrator of the General Services Administration for the U.S. (GSA) certifies to Congress the ratification papers are on file with the GSA office.)

[4]Bonnie Cook Freeman,"Antifeminists and Women's Liberation: A Case Study of a Paradox"(Austin, Texas: unpublished manuscript, 1979)

[5]U.S. Statistical Abstracts, Department of Commerce, 1975.

[6]U.S. Statistical Abstracts.

[7]David W. Brady and Kent L. Tedin, "Ladies in Pink: Religion and Political Ideology in the Anti-ERA Movement," Social Science Quarterly 56 (no. 4): 564-575 (March, 1976).

[8]Ibid., p. 574.

[9]U.S. Statistical Abstracts.

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[19]Saint Paul, I Corinthians.

[20]Information based on interview of Becky Conn with Gordon Wright, President, Austin State Church of the Latter Day Saints (Mormon) (May, 1977).

[21]Information based on interview of this author with Lottie Beth Hobbs, President of Women Who Want to be Women, now Pro Family Forum, in March, 1979.

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